

# ***FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

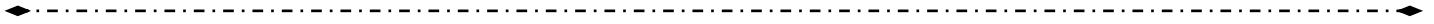
**Meeting Date:** April 14, 2017

**Agenda Item:** Captain Clark Fishing Access Site Road Acquisition (R5)

**Division:** Fisheries

**Action Needed:** Endorsement

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 Min



## **Background**

The Captain Clark FAS is located on the Yellowstone River approximately 40 miles east of Billings. This 148-acre FAS was acquired in 1965. It has a concrete boat ramp, an accessible fishing pier and allows for overnight camping. This is a popular site, with use estimated to be around 13,000 visitors annually. The access road is approximately a mile long. The last .3 miles of the road borders a backwater slough that became an active channel several years ago, when a gravel bar began forming in the river at the mouth of the slough. During periods of high river flows the gravel bar is positioned to direct disproportionate amounts of water down the slough causing excessive erosion of the river bank adjacent to the access road. The erosion has reached the point where it is now beginning to cut into the FAS access road. The road provides the only land access to this site and can't be relocated without encroaching on adjacent private land. The adjacent landowner has been contacted by FWP and is agreeable to discussing the sale of a small parcel of land that would allow FWP to move this short section of the access road further away from the river. The exact amount of land needed hasn't been determined yet but is estimated at 1-2 acres.

## **Public Involvement Process & Results**

There has been no public involvement to date on acquiring this parcel. Upon gaining the commission's endorsement to proceed with this proposed acquisition, the department will work out terms of an agreement with the adjacent landowner and then conduct an environmental review and solicit public comments.

## **Alternatives and Analysis**

The commission's endorsement would enable the department to pursue the acquisition of this parcel through fee title or easement. Doing so would allow this small section of the access road to be moved away from the river providing guaranteed public access into the foreseeable future. Alternatively, an engineered bank stabilization project that would prevent further erosion of the stream bank was also considered. However, due to the estimated high cost of the project, the negative impacts of hardening the stream bank and the uncertainties of obtaining the required permits make it a less desirable option.

## **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends that commission endorse the department's request to pursue negotiations with the adjacent landowner. It is currently the only option available that would allow the department to provide continued overland access to the Captain Clark FAS.

## **Proposed Motion**

I move the Fish and Wildlife endorse FWP's request to pursue negotiations with the adjacent landowner to the Captain Clark FAS.